

IN THE CLAIMS:

Applicants have canceled claims 3, 20, 23, and 25, without prejudice or disclaimer, amended claims 1, 5, 6, 19, and 24, and presented new claims 26-28. All pending claims are presented below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings in the application.

1. (currently four times amended) An isolated protein characterized by an ability to form a complex with receptors of the Tumor Necrosis Factor (“TNF”) superfamily including the cytoplasmic domain of CD40 as determined by a yeast two-hybrid interaction assay or a co-immunoprecipitation assay, said isolated protein comprising ~~an amino acid sequence having 70-100% homology to the amino acid sequence~~ amino acids 54-140 of SEQ ID NO: 2 or a fragment thereof of at least 10 amino acids in length and able to form said complex ~~said isolated protein characterized by an ability to form a complex with receptors of the TNF superfamily including the cytoplasmic domain of CD40.~~

Claim 2 (previously canceled).

Claim 3 (currently canceled).

Claim 4 (previously canceled).

5. (currently three times amended) The isolated protein of claim 1 wherein said isolated protein is a fragment ~~, said fragment~~ comprising the amino acids 54-362 of SEQ ID NO: 2.

6. (currently four times amended) The isolated protein of claim 1 wherein said isolated protein is a fragment comprising the amino acids ~~274-362~~ 54-273 of SEQ ID NO: 2.

Claims 7-18 (previously canceled).

19. (currently three times amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising the isolated functional protein of claim 1 or a functional fragments ~~fragment~~ thereof of at least 10

amino acids in length and able to form said complex, and
a pharmaceutical acceptable carrier material.

Claim 20 (currently canceled).

Claims 21 and 22 (previously canceled).

Claim 23 (currently canceled).

24. (currently amended) A ~~pharmaceutical~~ composition comprising the isolated protein of claim 5 together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier material.

Claim 25 (currently canceled).

26. (new) The isolated protein of claim 1 wherein said isolated protein is a fragment comprising the amino acids 54-236 of SEQ ID NO: 2.

27. (new) A composition comprising the isolated protein of claim 6 together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier material.

28. (new) A composition comprising the isolated protein of claim 26 together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier material.